

Good People Do Not Go to Heaven

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

No doubt you have occasionally seen an apple with a wormhole in it. But did you ever wonder whether the worm began to bore from the inside or from the outside? Well, scientists tell us it began on the inside! They say that the egg is laid in the blossom, and that after the wiggly, undesirable little creature hatches in the core, it eats its way to the skin. There is worm that is operating on the inside of all humanity. It is the worm called sin. And that is why none of us are good. We are all bad. My study is entitled, "Good people do not go to Heaven."

Does this title offend you or surprise you? Many well-meaning people today teach that if we live by the rules found in the Sermon on the Mount and keep the Golden Rule that we will be "**good enough**" to go to Heaven. They actually believe that if they have enough good deeds on the right side of the scale that God will see them as a "good person." They believe that in the end God will somehow look at them as being a "**good person**" who has done their very best in life to merit salvation and Heaven.

A great multitude of people teach that if we just support our families and give donations to the church and various relief organizations that God will look at them as a "good person" and view them as being worthy of entering Heaven when they pass from this life. **But is this what the Bible really teaches?** We must consider what the book of Romans teaches on this matter of man's goodness.

Romans 3:10-12

"As it is written, **There is none righteous, no, not one:** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**"

Does this shock you as you read God's estimate about yourself and all mankind? This is God's diagnosis of the human heart. From the perspective of the lost human race who "are all under sin" (Rom. 3:9) and who are "all" sinners (Rom. 3:23), God actually says that there

are no good people in His sight. This is a different tune than what we so often hear about man today. **Man thinks he is basically good but God says he is absolutely bad!**

“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

The doctrine of the total depravity of man means that man is corrupt in his nature. He is bent on doing evil and man’s relationship to a holy God is unholy and he is a wicked and vile sinner in God’s sight. Man is polluted with sin and does not have the original righteousness that Adam possessed at creation. Mankind has an inherited sinful pollution that is in his human nature. Because of this there is no spiritual good in relation to God’s perfect standard. There is only spiritual perversion before God.

“There is none that doeth good, no, not one”

Two cockroaches decided to visit their favorite restaurant--so the story goes. While the larger of the two finished his meal, the smaller one said, "You would have believed the house I just left. It was spotless. The lady must have been a cleanaholic. Everything was shiny-the sink, the counters, the floors. Everything was sparkling." The other roach was eating garbage and stopped his munching, looked with some annoyance at his companion, and said, "Do you have to talk like that while I'm eating?"

This story about roaches can apply to human nature as well. Human nature is depraved, corrupt, wicked and perverted. Mankind has a nature from Adam that is bent on doing evil or eating garbage. It seeks out evil and wants to do evil. It longs to feed on the garbage of the world system. We are wicked sinners by birth and also by practice. Therefore, the Biblical estimate of man is true.

“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

We must remember that God is not thinking about those individual deeds of kindness or love that are manifested within the human race. He is not referring to that type of moral living that we might view as being good on the surface or from the standpoint of societal living.

From the standpoint of society there are people who are just and others who are not just. I think Jesus recognized this. For instance,

Jesus said in Matthew 5:45:

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Jesus recognized that some people within the realm of humanity are just in various actions while others are not. From the perspective of humanity some are notoriously worse than others. Not every person is going to commit rape, shoot you or steal your car. Not every person will turn out to be another Adolph Hitler.

In the parable in Matthew 22:10 Jesus said:

“So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.”

When looking at humanity there are obviously those people, who on the surface, or from the standpoint of human living in society, do not appear to be as bad as others. After all, they do not outwardly kill people or rob banks. They don't cheat on their wife. They provide for their families. They don't smoke, chew or go with girls that do! We also know that lost mankind will be judged according to the degree of their wicked deeds in the final judgment (Rev. 22:12) which would indicate that there are different levels or degrees of sinfulness or wickedness in God's mind.

I know unsaved people who are moral upright citizens who pay their bills and who want to raise their children with some kind of morals. So how can God say that “there is none that doeth good” if some people are bank robbers and others help poor people in some kind of charity? How can God conclude that all people are bad when some lost people in society help people get off drugs or assist down syndrome children and do kind deeds for others while others greedily live for themselves? Is this a discrepancy in God's Word?

“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

We must remember in this text that God is looking at our overall life as it is viewed under sin's power and control (Rom. 3:9) and under the condemnation that results from this sin which is spiritual death or hell (Rom. 6:23). **God is looking at mankind from the standard of His absolute impeccable holiness and flawless righteousness.** From God's point of view there are no good people because all people are born with a sin nature, which can only produce bad works, even if those works seem to be good on the exterior. People are born possessing a life that is completely opposite of God and His perfect standard of holiness and righteousness. This is called total depravity or the total wickedness of mankind before God because of inherited sin from Adam. Man is depraved in everything that He does.

In relationship to societies standards within the human race there are good people who do kind acts toward others and even seek to live an outwardly moral life. They give to the Salvation Army at Christmas time and help feed the homeless. They might help a stranded motorist on the highway by providing gas for them. From the *standpoint of society or on the level of mankind* these are good acts. But from God's standard of absolute perfection and righteousness there are no good people on planet earth because every person falls short of His perfect righteousness and holiness. They all stand imperfect before a flawless God who must vindicate His holy name.

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Think of this. Even the good things that people do from the standpoint of human society and for human society are still not good works from the standpoint of God or from God's viewpoint. The works of lost humanity are never done for God's glory but for man's own fleshly praise or human merit before God, no matter how mankind may rate these works on a human scale. Therefore, in God's holy sight and perfection there are no good people! *The human works that lost mankind does are not for God's glory but for their own praise and fall short of those works that are produced by the Holy Spirit and which are for God's glory. From the level and vantagepoint of society there may be good people who do good things. But from God's level or vantagepoint and from His standard of perfection there are no good people in His sight. In God's sight there are either*

absolutely righteous people or absolutely unrighteous people.

The conclusion is very clear. None of us are righteous in God's sight because all of us have sinned. We are absolutely unrighteous in need of God's imputed righteousness. We have all broken the perfect standard of God's law and stand unholy, unrighteous and condemned before a perfectly holy God.

Galatians 3:10

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

This leaves us with the inescapable conclusion that good people do not go to Heaven! Do you know why? It's because from the perspective of the lost human race and their need for salvation, there are no good people in God's sight. We must simply understand that there is no person born on earth that is good in God's eyes. **This tells us that good people cannot go to Heaven if there are no good people on earth that can go to Heaven!**

So here comes the important question: "If there are no good people in the sight of a holy God then how does a bad person like yourself get into Heaven? The answer is simple and very obvious. **You must understand that you are a sinner before God's presence and that you are actually a bad person.** You must see yourself as God sees you – an evil person who is separated from a holy God because of your sin. You must understand how bad you are before you can see how much you need Christ as your Savior. Once you understand how bad you are before God only then can you **repent** (change your mind or attitude) about your own sinfulness before God and your need for Christ.

Jesus said in Luke 13:5:

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (go to hell)."

You need to have this change of mind about your own sinfulness and wickedness before God and then by faith believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as your personal Savior from the future judgment of hell.

Acts 16:31 says:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...”

The Bible teaches that Christ actually bore your sins upon Himself on the cross and rose again from the dead to offer salvation to you today as a living Savior (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). If you will call upon the Lord Jesus today believing that He died bearing all your sins and judgment, only then can you be made right in God’s sight. Faith is a **personal response** to Jesus Christ believing that He has become your substitute for sin and judgment. ***Faith is that which reaches out and receives the gift of salvation, which Christ offers through His finished work.***

John 1:12

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name.”

My friend, you must repent of your sins and receive Christ as your Savior if you want to go to Heaven when you die. There is no other way to Heaven but through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). And the way to Heaven is by placing personal faith in Christ to save you.

I was doing some pastoral visiting at the John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore Maryland. While I was there a man approached me and began to relate to me how he was in the Vietnam War as a captain. Over three hundred men fell to their death under his command throughout the war. He said that there was a time in the war where he had a relic of Buddha in his pocket, a chain representing the Mohammed religion, the Star of David and a New Testament in his shirt pocket. He said that he wanted to cover all the religious ground that he could so that when He gets to Heaven Saint Peter will let him inside the gate. My friend, there is no way into Heaven but through Jesus Christ and His saving work. And you must repent for your sins before God and turn to Him in saving faith so that you can be saved from everlasting hell and damnation.

So the point is this. You can only go to Heaven when you realize how bad you are before a holy God and turn to Him through simple faith in His saving work, as presented in the Gospel message. **If we want to**

be realistic, only bad people can go to Heaven! These are those people in the human race of lost mankind who understand how separated and sinful they are before a holy God and who turn to Jesus Christ for His saving grace.

A very religious man called a Pharisee one day entered the temple and began to explain how good he was in comparison to other people in the world.

Luke 18:11-12

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”

The problem with this religious man, who was busy comparing himself with others, was that he had forgotten to compare himself with the only true standard for goodness, which is God Himself. This self-righteous man failed to see that he too was a wicked sinner in God’s sight who had offended God’s holiness! That’s why God says, “There is none righteous” and “There is none that doeth good.” **When compared to God’s perfect standard there can be no righteous or good people on earth.** We all have sinned and that makes us dreadfully bad before God. For this reason, all the righteous or good things that we think are good are viewed by God as filthy or soiled rags.

Isaiah 64:6

“But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

The principle behind this verse is that people, who do not have a right relationship with God, cannot do righteous acts that are pleasing to God. *If you are a sinner in God’s sight, then all the good things that you seemingly do will not change the plight that you are still a sinner in His sight.* In fact, those seemingly good things are like a stench in God’s nostrils such as a bleeding menstrual cloth of a woman (“filthy rags”). Most people think that the good things which they do are really good and that God is pleased with them. But this is not the case. **If**

there are no good people on earth, then there can be no good things that these people can do! If there are no good people in God's sight, then there are no good people that can do any good things that God will ever think are good from His perspective! This is because people are naturally born bad (evil) in God's eyes, and they cannot do anything that would please Him. Their evil nature has separated them from God and the ability to please Him. They are totally depraved.

Psalm 51:5 says:

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

The real problem of human nature is illustrated by a story about Thomas K. Beecher who had a clock on the wall of his church that ran consistently slow. The preacher hung a card above it, which read: "Don't blame my hands! The trouble lies deeper!"

The problem with man is that he is a sinner on the inside. He is born with a sin nature inherited from Adam (Romans 5:12-14). And in God's sight any outwardly good thing that bad people produce is still bad and is considered by God to be "filthy rags" because it is motivated by an inbred principle of evil inside the human heart. Nevertheless, we read that this deceived "good man" in the temple spoke about himself and all of his "good things" which he had thought he accomplished in life.

Luke 18:9 says:

"And he (Jesus) spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous (good), and despised others." Jesus said that this man, who thought he was good, could not be justified (declared righteous) in God's sight because he mistakenly thought that he was a **good person** before God. The other man realized that he **was bad** in God's sight and was justified (declared righteous) before God.

I once talked with a man who said that he was 75\25. I wondered what this meant so I asked him about it. He said that he was 75% good and 25% bad. Well, the Bible says that we are bad – 100% bad in God's eyes. God says that lost man is 100% bad. That is not a

good percentage. We are all at the bottom of the barrel. And when God saves us, He scoops us off the bottom of the barrel. The publican realized that he was a 100% bad sinner before God.

Luke 18:13-14 reads:

“And the publican (the person who recognized his sinfulness before God), standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified (made right before God) *rather* than the other...”

You see, God only saves bad people and allows them to go to Heaven. **Good people do not go to Heaven!** Jesus verifies this to us. Only those people who realize how bad they are before God will turn to Jesus Christ and ask for forgiveness and receive this right standing before God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.

The Bible concludes that good people do not go to Heaven! *Actually, only those people who realize that they are bad or evil before God and receive the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ go to Heaven (Rom. 6:23).* You must understand that you are not good but bad in God’s sight and put your faith in Jesus Christ to save you. You must compare yourself to the only perfect standard. This standard is God. And God says that you are a sinner who has offended His perfect righteousness and holiness. Don’t fool yourself by comparing yourself to other people like the Pharisee did. Compare yourself before God’s perfection and you will fall short (Rom. 3:23 – “All have sinned”). **You are not a good person. You are a bad and evil person before the presence of the holy and righteous God.**

Romans 3:10

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.”

Romans 3:12

“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

We are so corrupted that even the outwardly good things we do in this are somehow tainted with the flesh and pride. One reason is because we would throw these works in the face of God and say, “I’m good enough. Let me into Heaven.”

I have great news for you today. **God loves bad people!**

Romans 5:8

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners (bad people), Christ died for us.”

I have some other good news. **God can make bad people good in His sight!** Bad people can receive a right standing before God through Jesus Christ. When you by faith receive Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, it's then that the saving work of Jesus Christ is applied to your own life. This results in God the Father seeing you through the work and perfection of His own Son.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

“For he hath made him (Jesus Christ) *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we (those who believe on Christ), might be made the righteousness of God in him (in Christ's own perfection and righteousness).”

The Bible teaches that we can only be accepted before a holy God when we receive the perfect righteousness of God's Son. This righteousness becomes ours when we place our faith in Christ to save us. The sins of the world were placed on Jesus Christ so that, in turn, His righteousness could be given to those who trust in Him for salvation. That gift of righteousness is obtainable only by faith and becomes ours when we are spiritually and positionally placed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:22 says:

“Even the righteousness of God **which is by faith** of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.”

Philippians 3:9

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God **by faith.**”

Think of it. We receive the very righteousness of God through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The beloved verse of John 3:16 says:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him (personally responds to Christ in faith) should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

After a violent storm one night, a large tree, which over the years had become a stately giant, was found lying across the pathway in a park. Nothing but a splintered stump was left. Closer examination showed that it was rotten at the core because thousands of tiny insects had eaten away at its heart. The weakness of that tree was not brought on by the sudden storm; it began the very moment the first insect nested within its bark.

My friend, in a similar way, we are rotten to the core because we have Adam’s sin nature within us. There is no goodness in our human nature because we are totally depraved. We are absolutely unrighteous in God’s eyes. We have no righteousness of our own to offer God because “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10).

Since the believing sinner has no righteousness of his own, he needs to claim the righteousness of Jesus Christ as His own, so that God the Father will accept Him in His holy presence. This is called *imputed righteousness* or righteousness that is placed upon our sinful account before God so that our spiritual bank account can be erased of it’s sin and be deposited with the righteousness of God’s own Son.

Titus 3:5

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Maybe you have for the first time realized that you are a bad person before God’s holy sight. And you may feel hopelessly lost and on your way to hell. If so, Jesus wants to extend and invitation to you today, so that you might be saved, through receiving the perfect righteousness of His own Son for your own life. This saving righteousness can be yours through personal belief in Jesus Christ.

A man was greatly disturbed about his sin, so he wrote to Martin Luther. The reformer, who had agonized much over his own

shortcomings, replied, "Learn to know Christ and Him crucified. Learn to sing to Him and say--Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness. You took on Yourself what was mine (sin); You set on me what was Yours (righteousness). You became what You were not (sin) that I might become what I was not (righteous)." As we think about Calvary, let's thank God with overwhelming gratitude for that great exchange!

Jesus came to save bad people. He did not come to save good people. Do you know why? It's because everybody is bad! In God's sight everybody is bad.

Jesus said in Luke 5:32:

"I came not to call the righteous (good people), but sinners (bad people) to repentance."

You are bad. You are a lost sinner before God. You are going to hell. Therefore, you must repent (change your mind and thinking) about your sinfulness before God and your lost condition before God and your own need for His salvation. Then you will be ready to make a personal response of faith in Jesus Christ to bring His wondrous salvation into your own heart and life.

Romans 10:13

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

It's time to pray to God and receive His gift of eternal life and salvation from hell. It's time for you to face your sins and your lost estate before the God of infinite holiness and perfect righteousness. On the concluding page there is a prayer that might help you to express your own personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. I trust that you will use this prayer as a way to express your heart to God as you reach out to Him for salvation.

Prayer

"Dear God, I have realized that I am a dreadful sinner in Your sight. I know that I am separated from You. But I thank You for loving me as a sinner and bad person. And today I want to express my own personal faith in Jesus Christ to become my Savior from hell. I need

to be clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ since I have no righteousness of my own. I am a bad person. God be merciful to me a sinner and save my soul today. I ask this in Jesus name, Amen.”